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## **OPTICAL BRAIN MONITORING OF COCAINE-INDUCED CEREBROVASCULAR AND INTRACELLULAR CALCIUM EFFECTS IN THE LIVING RAT**

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**Objective** is to optically assess the direct effects of cocaine on tissue blood flow, cerebral oxygenation and intracellular calcium in the cocaine-naïve living rat to understand the cerebrovascular effects and cellular mechanisms caused by cocaine **Method:** Six anesthetized rats were injected intravenously with 1 mg/kg cocaine. Cerebral blood volume, oxygenation and intracellular calcium were simultaneously detected from the cortical surface by optical diffusion and fluorescence spectroscopy. The physiological parameters of ECG, respiration rate, arterial pressure, PCO<sub>2</sub> and body temperature were monitored. **Results:** Cocaine induced the 4.1 % and 3.1% decrease in cerebral blood volume and tissue oxygenation respectively in 3-4 min after the cocaine administration when compared to baseline values. In parallel we observed a slight decrease in the mean arterial pressure. Interestingly, intracellular calcium transients were stable for 8.5-min after the cocaine administration before increasing to a maximum of  $26.4 \pm 6.0\%$  at 30 min. These suggest that cocaine causes cerebral vasospasm that may lead to borderline brain ischemia or potential stroke.

Key words: Cocaine, cerebrovascular and calcium

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